

**REDMOND PLANNING COMMISSION  
MINUTES**

February 15, 2006

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Chairperson Snodgrass, Vice Chair Query, Commissioners Hinman, Kumar, McCarthy, Parnell, and Petitpas

**STAFF PRESENT:** Terry Marpert Lori Peckol, Kim Dietz, Terry Shirk, and Sarah Stiteler - Planning Department

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Karen Nolz

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chair Snodgrass in the City of Redmond Council Chambers. For Items from the Audience, Chair Snodgrass recused himself because he owns property in the North Redmond Neighborhood. Vice Chair Query presided.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was approved by acclamation.

**ITEMS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

John Harkness, 15805 NE 116<sup>th</sup> Street, Redmond, talked about the Cooper property located at 16424 NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Street. He reviewed the issues about that specific property that he brought up in a letter submitted on November 21, 2005 from Camwest Development with the following attachments: a topographic map, a wetland survey, and memos from Camwest's soils engineer and civil engineer. They have gone through the due diligence and found that 10% of the site is constrained with sensitive areas. The property does not have significant constraints and is no different from any other property they have developed in this area at R-4, so should enjoy some of the same rights the neighbors have enjoyed. Part of this property, the easterly third, is already zoned R-4. For the Comprehensive Plan amendment, they provided the information that would have been required to request an individual rezone of the property—the geotechnical, civil and wetland information. He requested that the Planning Commission recommend the rezone of this property to R-4, similar to neighboring properties. The property does not abut NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street as there is another property that buffers. The 10% of the site that is sensitive area is located in the northwest corner, which would be additional buffer along the 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE and NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street. This property could be developed at R-4 and remain compatible with the surrounding agricultural areas.

Geoff Clayton spoke regarding the property at 11403 154<sup>th</sup> Place NE, saying that he is a licensed engineer and hydrogeologist and that he is working with Stu Konzen, and has studied this property that is located above the 60 Acres King County park. He considers this to be a very exciting property for residential development for three reasons: It would add to the diversity of choices in housing in Redmond, especially for families who would like to have housing where children can play safely without having to cross streets. It could produce significant environmental benefits because of the wetlands that could be restored and non-native vegetation that could be removed. This site is ideally suited for low impact development. Mr. Clayton has looked at this property in terms of its landslide hazards, steep slopes, and erosion hazards characteristics, as well as its seismic and volcanic hazard potential, and a colleague has looked at the wetlands. They have determined that there is great potential at this site for putting housing on the upper portion of it and using low impact development and restoration techniques to improve the degraded wetlands down at the toe of the slope. Originally, there were 3,000 acres of wetlands in the Sammamish

Valley, and now there are 150. Every acre is a significant percentage of restoration. In particular, the low impact development on this site could occur toward the road. There are some degraded wetlands up there. Those wetlands could be moved down to the base of the slope to achieve much better function and habitat and to do some reconnection of some streams that have degraded and straightened due to agricultural needs in the past. He hoped the Planning Commission members would keep open minds because to do these kinds of improvements dollars are needed. To get these dollars, a certain amount of density is needed.

Commissioner Parnell inquired if there are small subterranean streams on this side of the Sammamish Valley like those known to exist on the other side of the Sammamish Valley.

Mr. Clayton responded that he has specifically looked at both the east and west sides of the valley for different projects. There is a layer of impermeable sediment overlaid by sandy sediment that is about 30 feet above Willows Road. There are a series of springs that come out or drop off of the hillside from NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street south. On the other side of the valley, there is stormwater that comes down from culverts, so those are essentially created wetlands. There are a couple of small springs, but the main feature is the fact that there is a small body of open water at the very bottom that is connected at a couple of small streams that have rerouted. Quite a bit to create a much higher quality wetland could be done on the valley floor between the King County property and the slope. He has been studying wetlands for five years in terms of thermal gain. To create these wetlands that are open points, and where the water heads up and goes into the Sammamish River that is already too warm. More trees and hummocks are needed, as is more complexity in the wetlands. He explained that this property is a nine-acre parcel—the lower part being Class 2 wetlands, forested wetlands on the slope, and also some anthropogenically created wetlands resulting from storm culverts. About three acres are completely free of buffers, and two have 50- to 100-foot buffers. About six acres is within wetlands and wetland buffer, and the bulk of that is wetland buffer. Three acres is unconstrained. But by shifting around the wetland that is largely due to road construction, and transferring that down, the ratio would be much different. The key would be some clustering in order to generate the funds to do the project.

Commissioner McCarthy wanted to know how long it would be before low impact development could be permitted, assuming that the zoning increased in that area.

Mr. Clayton answered that he is working on another low impact development here in Redmond, and it is his understanding that they have at least six months to go before the stormwater group buys off on infiltration. Once that happens, they could move fairly quickly. He also confirmed that this property could be developed to whatever is allowed by law.

Erin Aten, 11720 154<sup>th</sup> Place NE, near the intersection of 116<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE and 154<sup>th</sup> Place NE, overlooking the soccer fields, commented that she has no interest in rezoning. She does not want to sell her property or have other people build on it, but she does have traffic concerns if the rezoning happens, especially the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians along the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Chair Snodgrass rejoined the meeting at 7:19 PM.

## **PUBLIC HEARING AND STUDY SESSION**

### **Education Hill Neighborhood Plan Update**

Vice Chair Query gave some background on this process, which would probably take another two to three months, and thanked the neighborhood for input over the past fifteen months.

Senior Planner Sarah Stiteler made a few introductory remarks and reviewed some of the issues on which the Citizens Advisory Committee has been working. She introduced the four CAC members present and

showed the physical map of the Education Hill neighborhood. She briefly went over the vision for the next 20 years regarding parks, recreation and trails, transportation, housing and land use on a small 10-acre area north of 104<sup>th</sup> and up to 108<sup>th</sup> at the northeast corner of the neighborhood. That 10-acre area is currently zoned R-3, but the CAC thinks it could be zoned R-4 with consideration of the environmental constraints. Single-family housing does enable other housing options, such as cottages, duplexes or other clustered housing.

Mark DeCoursey, living at 8209 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue NE for almost 2.5 years, said he has seen the density increase, and has concerns about the plans for more development because the traffic is increasing. To have 10% or 20% more cars on the road would be a serious situation because there is not much improvement to the road, sewage and water systems happening.

Reverend Rob Roy Ranger, 16650 NE 89<sup>th</sup> Street, the chair for the Education Hill CAC, addressed the issue of the committee's direction and the allegation that the CAC members did not represent the community. He said that he wished that Mr. DeCoursey had been on the CAC. The CAC did not address the sewage and that would have been a good question to ask at the time. The issue of revising 166<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE from four lanes to three lanes is counterintuitive, and the CAC spent much time working through the process and trying to understand that. They could only rely on the information they were given. They had experts come in and speak to them about how that would work. They were looking at twenty years out and probably came down on the side of safety concerns. Although some committee members disagreed, the majority of the committee decided that going from four lanes to three on 166<sup>th</sup> was the best alternative. Planning for and regulating density is important in controlling density that will inevitably happen.

Harlan McElhaney, 21801 W Lost Lake Road, Snohomish, WA 98296, a civil engineer representing a property at 10631 Avondale Road, in the area that is proposed to be rezoned to R-4, said he wanted to go on record as supporting that rezone.

Donald Knopf, 10905 176<sup>th</sup> Circle NE, a member of the CAC committee, commented that each one of the areas in Redmond is different. Education Hill might be considered built up, but it is a potentially sensitive area. Between now and 2020, a lot of the homes on Education Hill will reach the point where they might be replaced. People might purchase two adjacent older homes and replace them with one large home. If that happens in too many places, it would price the area so that people already living there could not afford to live there. He commented that this is a sensitive issue that deserves consideration.

Staff provided a matrix as a starting point for discussion and suggested focusing on policies, then regulations.

The Planning Commissioners requested more information before the next study session, as follows:

- N-EH-4 – Chair Snodgrass did not recall the plan regarding annual meetings.
- N-EH-5 – Commissioner Parnell would like to see an ongoing forum for communication between the members of the community in general.
- N-EH-6 – Chair Snodgrass did not agree with the requirement that the Neighborhood Committee participate in neighborhood meetings.
- N-EH-8 – Commissioner Hinman expressed interest in knowing about other jurisdictions that have a backyard home process in place, including information on fee-simple lots and deed restrictions. He is supportive of strategies like those.
- N-EH-10 – Commissioner Petitpas added a discussion on general commercial policies for other than Hartman Park.
- N-EH-11 – Commissioners Hinman and Petitpas requested more information about the two bullets regarding parking and other enhancements for the Redmond/Puget Power Trail. Staff

explained that this is currently a concept, but the opportunity for master planning would be present in about five years in connection with the lease with Puget Power.

- N-EH-14 – Commissioner McCarthy expressed interest in hearing what the Parks Board would have to say about safety lighting in parks.
- N-EH-15 – Vice Chair Query suggested encouraging and promoting the community and corporate use of parks by their sponsoring of special events and volunteerism.
- N-EH-20 – Chair Snodgrass would like to talk about the allowed number of units, as this is the same for duplex and single-family residences, and would probably result in no duplexes being built.
- N-EH-21 – Chair Snodgrass requested that staff get the Parks Board's position on parks and facilities at Hartman Park.
- N-EH-22 – Commissioner Petitpas said that she has questions about the numbers. Commissioner Hinman commented that he is not sure how subareas fit in with the rest of the discussion. Commissioner Petitpas requested a better map of the subareas on page 6. Commissioner McCarthy had two issues with this policy: Wants to ensure that the desired ratio of single-family housing with other units is accomplished. The requirement for participation by a City representative in neighborhood groups as it relates to the percentage of housing and how that is evaluated deserves careful consideration.
- N-EH-24 and 25 – Commissioner Kumar commented that she did not understand the difference between Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and backyard homes. She wanted to know what the impacts of allowing those would be on utilities, such as water and sewage. Commissioner Parnell requested to add a discussion on providing additional incentives for ADUs.
- N-EH-34 – Commissioner Hinman indicated that he appreciates that study and gathers that would be accomplished incrementally, but any ideas on how that phasing might go would be useful. For example, what Public Works staff has in mind for stoplights, enhancements, potential median, other details for the reconfiguration to three lanes, and how that might sequence.
- N-EH-43 – Commissioner Hinman commented that he is not sure what the botanical park is. Commissioner Parnell would like more discussion on what role the City could play in the initial funding of and selection of sites for parks in Education Hill to create a botanical garden and possibly for other parks citywide.
- N-EH-45, 46 and 47 – Vice Chair Query would like to have some understanding of what was envisioned here.
- Commissioner McCarthy thought the extension of 183<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE should be included in the issues list.
- Chair Snodgrass requested ten minutes from Public Works on sewage capacity for Education Hill.
- Table 1 – Commissioner Hinman requested more elaboration. Chair Snodgrass commented that the inclusion of sidewalks should be consistent, continuous and connected.
- Vice Chair Query would like to discuss rezoning of the property on Avondale.

Staff will add these issues to the matrix.

Commissioner Parnell commented that the North Redmond Neighborhood Plan was exemplary in terms of its emphasis on trail connections and interconnectedness between cul-de-sacs, and he suggested that the Education Hill Neighborhood Plan could be enhanced by using that of North Redmond as a template. He said he was interested in existing cul-de-sacs, as well as new ones, and the possibility of providing that benefit to underserved areas of the city. He continued that he would like to see some discussion about high school traffic and parking in neighborhoods. He thought that N-EH-43, Table 1, was an excellent start and that #9, in particular, has great potential to connect two parts of the city that are not connected now because of a major geographical obstacle.

Ms. Stiteler explained that staff did use the language used in the North Redmond Neighborhood Plan to the extent possible, considering the differences between the two neighborhoods. The North Redmond Neighborhood Plan has more developed capacity. Staff will take another look at that.

## **STUDY SESSION**

### **North Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update**

Commissioner Petitpas chaired this discussion. Chair Snodgrass recused himself.

#### **Public Testimony:**

Mike Cooper, 16424 NE 122<sup>nd</sup> Street, presented eleven pictures of his property, explaining that the eastern portion is zoned R-4 and the western portion is R-1. All but two of his pictures, the first and last, showed the R-1 property. These pictures showed that this property is very buildable. The soils work and surveys have proven that everything is within the City's requirements. He requested that the Planning Commissioners consider this before the issue goes to City Council. He noted that a King County property buffers his property from NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street, and any building on the property would be set back from NE 124<sup>th</sup> Street.

Stu Konzen, 12403 54<sup>th</sup> Place NE, Redmond, explained that this property is above South 60 Acres where the soaring happens. He pointed out on the map that the green areas show buffers and wetlands. The south of the property is almost all wetlands. He owns four parcels with three houses. There is a seasonal pond with a stream that fills the pond more and more each year. Two-thirds of the property is not wetland area. The house in the middle is near a steep slope, originally built in 1950. He noted the speeders on NE 116<sup>th</sup> Street and that accidents happen when drivers are speeding uphill on NE 116<sup>th</sup> Street. He pointed out the area where three of the nine acres are unconstrained. He was very interested in the development of 36 units zoned R-4 on his property, and would consider cottage housing.

Senior Planner Kim Dietz presented the staff report. The purpose of this study session was to complete the discussion and resolve remaining issues associated with the North Redmond neighborhood plan update. One remaining item in the current Issues Matrix was discussed—the proposed zoning and land use designation change with an associated overlay for specific R-1 properties.

In the packet was a letter to the property owners in the R-1 area dated April 19, 2005 from the Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, another letter from 1,000 Friends of Washington, and a response that City staff drafted. Senior Planner Terry Shirk summarized the correspondence noting the City's intention to consolidate properties as part of the neighborhood plan update efforts and to ensure compliance with the Growth Management Act in doing so. Planning staff sent a letter to all the property owners of property currently zoned R-1 in North Redmond. Staff did exclude these property owners, as well as those in the Equestrian Tracts and Valley Estates because these were fully developed neighborhoods with a character of their own that should be preserved. Staff did include for the discussion those developed R-1 or larger, or those that had other opportunities for higher density that perhaps were valuable for consideration. In May 2005 the City had a meeting to open the discussion about higher density. Most of the people who attended expressed that they had no interest in rezoning. Ms. Shirk showed on the map all areas that were not interested. Those people were clear that they had no interest in discussing rezoning or changes to their existing zoning. The City announced that it had no interest in pursuing that, and the matter was closed. The Citizens Advisory Committee did have extensive discussions on other areas that had some constraints and expressed an interest in rezoning. The recommendation from the North Redmond Citizens Advisory Committee was to consider rezoning to R-4.

Ms. Dietz continued that staff decided instead of looking at this on an individual basis that the most efficient process would be through the neighborhood plan. The proposal is to cap the rezoning at R-4 and to preserve all critical areas and buffers. For the transfer of density use of the critical areas, the proposal is

to do this at one unit per acre maximum as opposed to four units per acre. She also noted that the 1,000 Friends of Washington letter cautions against site-specific rezones.

Ms. Shirk explained that the City must comply with the Growth Management Act in doing rezones. Redmond has an exemplary Critical Areas program and has regulations that would be able to protect these properties, while allowing Redmond to be in compliance with the Growth Management Act. The City's map is very general and may show more restraints on properties than actually exist. The 1,000 Friends of Washington group has indicated that Redmond could be out of compliance with the Growth Management Act and subject to some sort of litigation.

In the event of litigation, Acting Policy Planning Manager Lori Peckol explained that the Hearings Board would need to make a decision within 90 days; the appeal would have to happen within 30 days. If the Hearings Board ruled against Redmond, staff would be required to bring the Comprehensive Plan into compliance. If the City kept the zoning at R-1 and was challenged, the Hearings Board would be looking at the City's record to see what justified that R-1 zoning. They would want to know: Did the properties meet the three-part test? Are the Critical Areas extensive? Are they complex and are they high-rank order? Has the City demonstrated that? The City's record would be the justification for all that.

**IT WAS MOVED BY COMMISSIONER McCARTHY AND SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HINMAN TO ACCEPT STAFF'S RECOMMENDATION TO HAVE AN OVERLAY FOR R-4 WITH A ONE-UNIT PER ACRE ALLOWANCE FOR THOSE AREAS THAT ARE COVERING CRITICAL AREAS OR WETLANDS.**

Senior Planner Kim Dietz explained that staff would like to pull a few areas out of this proposal and showed those areas on the map. The first area was in the 154<sup>th</sup> Street NE area—some erosion hazard areas, some seismic hazard areas, some wetlands, and some Class 2, Class 3, and Class 4 streams. The properties along Red-Wood Road have some erosion hazard areas because of slopes and maybe the soils. She also showed some aerial pictures to demonstrate the way the land is acting now in combination with the Critical Areas. On the Washington Cathedral property moving east, there is that combined effect of Critical Areas on the nearby property. On the Cooper property heading south along the ravine, there is a cumulative impact. She planned to work with Cathy Beam and other staff to delineate the appropriate areas to be exempted. She also explained that the City has never had to defend its critical areas, but had the process in place to do so with its full staff of experts and consultants from Adolphson Associates and, if necessary, could pull in a third party for confirmation.

**MOTION CARRIED (4-1-1), WITH VICE CHAIR QUERRY OPPOSED AND COMMISSIONER PARNELL ABSTAINING.**

Vice Chair Querry opposed the motion because there would be a sewage line going down a steep slope in Perrigo Heights, there would be 90+ homes being built over what any reasonable person would consider wetlands on the Coleman property on 183<sup>rd</sup> Avenue NE, and there is unnatural rain accumulation on at least one property. She noted that many residents in the North Redmond and Education Hill neighborhoods have expressed their desire to preserve open space, and this motion would not do that.

Commissioner Parnell said that he did not think he had enough information, so decided to abstain.

## **ADJOURN**

Commissioner Petitpas adjourned the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

Minutes Approved On:

Recording Secretary: